

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 SSM-03 SAA-02 IO-13 /094 W
-----021102 051412Z /43

R 051233Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VALLETTA 02033

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, MT, LY
SUBJECT: QADHAFI IN MALTA

1. SUMMARY: COL. QADHAFI VISITED MALTA FROM JULY 1 TO JULY 3. HE PROMISED UNCONDITIONAL ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO HELP MALTA ACHIEVE ITS NEUTRAL, NON-ALIGNED POLICY, NOTING THAT "THE SECURITY OF MALTA IS TIED UP WITH THE SECURITY OF LIBYA". THE PRESENCE OF THE FLEETS OF THE TWO SUPERPOWERS, ACCORDING TO QADHAFI, CONSTITUTED THE GREATEST DANGER TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. END SUMMARY.

2. COL. QADHAFI ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL LIBYAN GOVERNMENT SECRETARIES INCLUDING TURAYKI (FOREIGN AFFAIRS), AL-TALHI (INDUSTRY), TABU (AGRICULTURE), AL-SHARIF (TRADE), AND EL-KARROUBI (POSITION UNKNOWN) VISITED MALTA FROM
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JULY 1 TO JULY 3. WHILE HERE HE MET TWICE WITH PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF, ADDRESSED A MALTA LABOR PARTY (MLP) RALLY, VISITED GOZO, HELD A NEWS CONFERENCE AND PARTICIPATED IN SEVERAL CEREMONIAL EVENTS. AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS VISIT A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS (TEXT SENT SEPTEL).

3. THE COMMUNIQUE, AFTER NOTING THE STRONG LINKS OF FRIENDSHIP BINDING THE PEOPLE OF MALTA AND LIBYA, STATED THAT THE TWO LEADERS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE HIGH STANDARD WHICH HAS BEEN MAINTAINED IN THE CONSOLIDATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THEIR TWO COUNTRIES. BOTH SIDES STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FOREIGN MILITARY BASES AND TO THIS END LIBYA PROMISED ITS FULL POLITICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MALTA SO THAT "MALTA WILL NEVER AGAIN HAVE A FOREIGN MILITARY BASE ON ITS SOIL". THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO COVERED OTHER BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES (SEE SEPTTEL).

4. IN HIS SPEECH AT A WELL-ATTENDED MLP RALLY JULY 2, QADHAFI EMPHASIZED THAT LIBYA'S SECURITY WAS BOUND TO MALTA'S AND THAT IT WAS IN LIBYA'S STRATEGIC INTEREST TO ENSURE THAT MALTA WOULD NOT COME UNDER FOREIGN MILITARY DOMINATION. HE ALLUDED TO "THE ENEMY" (A REFERENCE TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES) AS HAVING ARRIVED IN MALTA BEFORE GOING ON TO LIBYA AND THAT LIBYA MUST ENSURE THAT MALTA WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO ACT AS A BRIDGE FOR THIS "ENEMY". QADHAFI CLAIMED THAT THE EUROPEANS HAD STIFLED AND ILL-TREATED MALTA AND THAT THE MALTESE ALTHOUGH ORIGINALLY EUROPEAN, WAS BOUND FOREVER WITH THE ARABS THROUGH THEIR PHOENICIAN HERITAGE AND THUS PART OF "THE GREATER EAST".

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5. LIBYA, SAID QADHAFI, WAS READY, IF ASKED, TO DEFEND MALTA AGAINST ATTACK, TO TRAIN MALTESE IN THE USE OF ARMS TO DEFEND MALTA'S FREEDOM AND TO GIVE MALTA ARMS TO SAFEGUARD THIS FREEDOM. LIBYA HAD NO INTENTION, HOWEVER, TO COME TO MALTA TO REPLACE THE BRITISH OR TO USE MALTA FOR "COLONIALIST PURPOSES". HELP WOULD BE GIVEN WITHOUT ANY ULTERIOR MOTIVES.

6. QADHAFI ALSO OFFERED TO CONTINUE TO HELP MALTA ECONOMICALLY UNTIL THE GOM HAD SOLVED THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE CLOSURE OF THE BRITISH BASE. HE SAID THAT FREEDOM FROM THE MILITARY ECONOMY WAS "SOMETHING HISTORIC" WHICH THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT WOULD HELP THE MALTESE ACHIEVE.

7. QADHAFI CONCLUDED BY ASSERTING THAT LIBYA WAS PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES TO HELP MALTA BECOME A "CENTER OF SECURITY" BUT IF OTHER COUNTRIES DID NOT WISH TO COOPERATE, LIBYA WAS PREPARED "TO GO IT ALONE". "THIS IS OUR DUTY", QADHAFI SAID.

8. QADHAFI, DURING HIS JULY 3 PRESS CONFERENCE, CLAIMED THAT THE GREATEST DANGER TO THE MEDITERRANEAN WAS CAUSED BY THE PRESENCE OF THE FLEETS OF THE TWO SUPERPOWERS. ANOTHER DANGER WAS FOR COUNTRIES TO BE ALIGNED WITH POWER BLOCS SUCH AS NATO. QADHAFI, RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ABOUT WHICH COUNTRIES COULD THREATEN MALTA, SAID THAT HE THOUGHT NATO PROVIDED A DANGER TO THE MEDITERRANEAN, THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA. HE DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON HOW MALTA FITTED INTO USSR POLICY FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN, SAYING THAT SUCH QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE RUSSIANS.

9. WHEN ASKED WHAT FORM LIBYAN AID TO MALTA UP TO THE

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ICA-11 SSM-03 SAA-02 IO-13 /094 W
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R 051233Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 VALLETTA 02033

PRESENT TIME HAD TAKEN AND WHAT FORM IT WOULD TAKE AFTER MARCH 31, 1979, QADHAFI EVADED THE FIRST QUESTION BUT PROMISED THAT, WHEN MALTA CEASES TO BE A FOREIGN BASE, LIBYAN AID WOULD BE DOUBLED.

10. ON THE MEDIAN LINE ISSUE QADHAFI INDICATED THAT THE REASON WHY THE POPULAR CONGRESS (OF LIBYA) HAD NOT RATIFIED THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN MALTA AND LIBYA (WHICH WAS SIGNED IN MAY, 1976) WAS THAT IT DIFFERS SOMEWHAT FROM

THAT BETWEEN LIBYA AND TUNISIA AND THAT THE CONGRESS
THOUGHT BOTH AGREEMENTS SHOULD BE SIMILAR. HE ADDED THAT
WHEN THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE HAD REACHED A MEASURE
OF AGREEMENT ON HOW TO DETERMINE MEDIAN LINES BETWEEN
STATES IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE FASTER PROGRESS IN
RESOLVING THIS PROBLEM. HE CLAIMED THAT NO DIFFICULTY
EXISTED BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ON THIS ISSUE.

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11. WHEN ASKED ABOUT HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME
MINISTER, QADHAFI COMMENTED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE
POINTS MENTIONED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE, VARIOUS ECONOMIC
MATTERS AND RENEGOTIATION OF AN AGREEMENT TO SUPPLY MALTA
WITH OIL AT PREFERENTIAL PRICES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED.

12. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN CONSIDERED
SPECULATION THAT QADHAFI MIGHT STOP IN MALTA ON HIS WAY
HOME FROM HIS TOUR OF EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, THE GOM
DID NOT OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE HIS VISIT UNTIL JUNE 30. HE
WAS, NEVERTHELESS, KEPT VERY BUSY WITH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES
DURING HIS STAY. THE ARRIVAL CEREMONIES AT THE AIRPORT,
WHERE HE WAS MET BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE ENTIRE CABINET
EXCEPT THE PRIME MINISTER, DISINTEGRATED INTO A VIRTUAL
MELEE AS HUNDREDS OF LIBYAN STUDENTS (CURRENTLY STUDYING
IN MALTA) OVERWHELMED MALTESE AND LIBYAN SECURITY
PERSONNEL. PRESIDENT BUTTIGIEG AND QADHAFI MANAGED TO
ESCAPE QADHAFI'S ENTHUSIASTIC YOUNG ADMIRERS BY
COMMANDEERING THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR'S CAR, FLAG FLYING
AND CHAUFFEURED BY THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, LORRY
SANT. A REMARKABLE SIGHT, THE MORE SO IN LIGHT OF
THE ABSENCE OF LIBYAN RELATIONS WITH THE PRC. OUR COMMENTS
ON QADHAFI'S VISIT FOLLOW SEPTTEL. LAINGEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978VALLET02033
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780275-1105
Format: TEL
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780793/aaaadang.tel
Line Count: 207
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f0f7fb7a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2110902
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: QADHAFI IN MALTA
TAGS: PDIP, MT, LY, (QADHAFI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f0f7fb7a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014